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BEHEMOTH

- Strange stories: When a friend of mine returned from a holiday in England's Lake District early in 1994, she informed me she had heard a monster had been seen in Lake Windermere. I now have a clipping from the Evening Mail, May 19, p.3, which refers to the Tizzie Wizzie, or "strange beast ... on the shores of Lake Windermere": "The Tizzie-Wizzie is allegedly a cross between a hedgehog and a squirrel with wings and its sighting is being taken seriously". The clip reminds me of stories of cats with wings, and it is clearly not related to lake monster reports. I await further developments.

A sort of "living dinosaur"-report comes from the city of Famagusta, Cyprus (Sonntag Aktuell, May 25, p.80). According to this source, witnesses have heard strange sounds close to the old city wall. These sounds led to much speculation: the islamic cleric Sheik Kibrisi thought it was the roar of the dragon which, according to legend, has been guarding the king's palace for the last 500 years. Raul Denktasch, leader of the Turkish part of Cyprus, in which Famagusta is situated, declared the sounds were due to the owls nesting in the city walls. This is a fine example of how fortan phenomena are always interpreted either rational or irrational, depending on the interpreter's world view.

- Loch Ness: Andreas Trottmann has sent me a clip from the Highland News (May 7) on a new sighting of the Loch Ness thing. On April 10, a local couple saw an "estremely large object" in Urquhart Bay in a distance of only 200 yards. They saw two brown shapes about 10 ft in diameter and 3 ft apart. The female witness: "It was definitely an animal of some sort because - something came up and went down again... My husband was driving and I suddenly saw a shadow and though, 'It's awful calm, where's the shadow coming from?' I was looking back ... and I saw something on the surface go down again. It was pale brownish in colour, the end of one of the dark shadows caused a ripple. What struck me most was the big, dark shadow. Then something came up and went down again. It was not a hump. It was so big, that's when I noticed it in the water I got a fright." The couple returned to Urquhart Castle, where they saw the wake going to the other side of the loch. Perhaps the clue to what they saw is in the witnesses remark that passengers on board a pleasure boat in the bay didn't seem to notice the beast. There are several similar examples in Gould's 1934 classic book, and of course they refer to the wakes left by the boats which didn't seem to notice the monster following them! This explanation would not be valid if the boat was anchored and not moving, so only a completer report will help us to understand what was seen.

- Loch Ness bibliography: On the Loch Ness tourist submarine, Tageszeitung (switzerland), May 1, Berner Zeitung, April 30 (both clips supplied by Andreas Trottmann) - More information and comment on the Wilson photo hoax, see Nessletter 117 (April 94). - Nessie News, in Strange # 13, p.34.

- Behemoth bibliography: Giant serpents in deep Sibiria, in Strange # 13, p.29 - review of new book on expedition for Mokele mbembe, the alleged African dinosaur, Strange 13, p. 41.

ISIS

- Bibliography: Hongkong mermaid rumor, Fortean Times 74, p.12 - Fijian president said to be direct descendant of the shark god Dakuwaga, Fortean Times 74, p. 14 - Article by Fred Olen Ray: I own the aligator man, in Strange # 13, pp. 20-23. The "aligator man" is a stuffed fake creature.

- "Boy is turning into merman" was the gigantic headline in the Neue Spezial, the German edition of the Weekly World News (#8, 1994, p. 9). According to the report (the staff of the Neue Spezial freely admit they make up their reports, by the way) 12-year old Michael Hofer from Greifswald, in east Germany, has grown fins on his head and under his arms. The paper invented a Dr Klaus Dreyer, biologist at the Federal Department of Fisheries at Flensburg, who commented he had seen a similar case while "studying in Perth in England" (I always thought Perth was in Scotland...) He suggested the fins would simply drop after a few months, although the patient in Perth had kept his "fish eyes". Michael is now considering surgery, but fears the fins will grow twice as fast after they have been removed. A good retouched photo with an annoyed looking youth with a fish fin under the arm

illustrates the article.

LEVIATHAN

- The sea serpent caught off Hartlepool in March 1866 (identified as oarfish) can still be seen stuffed in the local museum - Fortean Times 74, p.8

DISCOVERIES/CRYPTOZOOLOGY

- Chinese psychics' quest for yeti (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 6 Nov 1993) - Chinese yeti sightings also in an article in the NEUE SPEZIAL 8/1994. The article at least seems to be based on factual reports.
- Noel Rowe, president of the Vietnam Society for the Protection of Monkeys has discovered 25 Tonkin monkeys about 250 km north of Hanoi. Science had assumed the spezies had already become extinct (Das Tier 12/1993, p.73)
- Giant sloth in Brasil: Welt am Sonntag, Jan 30, 1994, Maine Sunday Telegram, Feb 20, 1994, Portland Press Heral, Feb 23, 1994 (credit: Loren Coleman)

MARINE LIFE

- A 20 m fin whale stranded at Cape Gris-Nez close to Calais, France. According to the Marine Research Centre at Boulogne-sur-Mer, an even larger fin whale had attempted to protect the whale from stranding (Die Rheinpfalz, 24 Feb 94, quoting afp). // Whale stranded at the Phillipines at the end of May, and later eaten by locals (German newspaper, lost clipping) // A 20ft minke whale spent the six months prior to May in Loch Grimshader, a Lewis sea loch in the Hebrides, Scotland. It left for the open sea early in May (Aberdeen Press and Journal May 7, 94, credit: Andreas Trottmann).
- The remains of Richard Bistley, 20, were discovered in the stomach of a 2.5m tiger shark caught at Broome, 1600 km north of Perth, Australia (Süddeutsche Zeitung, Filderzeitung, both 30. Nov 1993). // The Government of Hongkong will hire "head hunters" to track and kill sharks, afp says. There were a growing threat by sharks which spoilt bathing fun in summer, a spokesperson for the Culture- and Relaxation Department declared (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, May 31, 94, p.9). So few people are killed each year by sharks that the usually silly shark massacres which happen every year show nothing else but the human desire for an archetypical "marine devil"./// At Sunset Cliffs, California, a white shark killed a female bather in April (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 18. Apr, p. 11, Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 18 Apr., p. 13, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18 Apr, p. 12 - adds that the shark was 3.6 m in length).

USO

- A new German UFO magazine has been launched, called UFO-KURIER and published in Rottenburg, it is along the CUFOS/"scientific ufology"-lines including all their paranoid concepts like abductions, US-alien deal, etc., with articles by such luminaries as Bill Moore and Graham Birdsall. A funny introductory article, by Jorge Martín, deals with the secret contract the US army has with the abducting aliens. We learn that one of their basis is under the lake Laguna Cartagena, in Puerto Rico. We are treated to stories of strange lights emerging or descending into the lake, grey beings close by, and all the rest. Some of the lights- and earth tremor-stories are interesting in the light of the earth lights approach by Devereux, but I'm afraid that most can be dismissed as misperceptions, as there are several military installations in the region which would supply enough air traffic for ufo-buffs to read significance into. The creatures seen are the "breys" of abduction folklore, who refer to the prototype established in Spielberg's Close Encounters and are most certainly fictional.

((The picture to the left is a line drawing based on the fish-boy as photographed in the NEUE SPEZIAL - see Isis section.))

